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Taking on Netflix

Video store on the corner of King and
Princess streets providing entertainment
for two decades now.
Page 3

Port Arts

Plan will outline the future for arts and
culture community in Port Colborne.
Page 5

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Helping teens in need



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NETWORK
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manager
of client
services
Sarah Eller
and Reach
Out Centre
supervisor
Amanda
Upper put
together
emergency
kits now
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for
homeless
youths who
visit the
community
agency.
See story
Page 2.

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■ PORT CARES: Agency goes to work to stem growing trend in community

Young, alone – and homeless

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

A blanket, deodorant and a toothbrush.

For some teens, they're nothing more than slumber party must-haves.

For others, they're essentials for surviving life on the streets.

Seeing a growing trend of Niagara youths having no place to call home, Port Cares recently started a campaign to ensure basic needs are met.

Emergency kits filled with everything necessary have been created and are awaiting teens at the organization's Port Colborne office.

"This is in response to need, in response to reality," executive director Christine Clark Lafleur said of the program, which was launched after staff recognized a growing number of young adults using the agency's services.

"We're showing these young people that whatever their circumstances, we do care," Clark Lafleur said.

"It's a small but important gesture to let them know that."

Since the program — the brainchild of staff member Karin DilBaise — began about a month ago, the agency has collected enough items to make 30 kits and has handed out seven.

Each kit includes gently used clothing, new socks and under-

wear, a list of emergency phone numbers, nonperishable snacks and water, a grocery store gift card, linens and a variety of hygiene products including deodorant, toothpaste, perfume and cosmetics.

"We know we can feed them. Now we can give them items for whatever they do next," Clark Lafleur said.

"Even if they're couch surfing, it means they've got something."

It's a common misconception, she said, that youth homelessness does not exist in small communities like Port Colborne.

It becomes more visible in the summer months when teens can sometimes be seen sleeping outside on urban trails or beaches. But the issue remains largely hidden from the public, she says, as service manager Sarah Eller said.

Many youths who have no stable home end up couch surfing and finding other ways to get by without accessing local supports, she said.

"When you think of homelessness, you get so used to seeing the image of someone on the street," Eller said. "It's more than that, it's hidden homelessness."

When young adults do come looking for a hot meal or shower at the agency's Reach

Out Centre, it's a chance for staff to connect them with services they can use to get back on their feet.

"Once you're able to make that first contact, you can work to get them into relationships with youths," centre supervisor Amanda Upper said.

"It's a starting point. It takes time to build trust."

That trust is important, Upper said, as many of the teens who walk through the centre doors have been mistreated and are escaping family breakdowns, addictions or mental health issues in the home or abuse.

To ensure they get the help they need, Port Cares works closely with The RAFT, a St. Catharines-based organization that provides support and housing assistance for at-risk and homeless youths across Niagara.

Homeless services, especially for youths, have historically been set up in larger urban centres. This would traditionally draw teens in need of assistance from smaller communities, uprooting them from their hometown, RAFT executive director Mike Letby said.

But with the introduction of programs like Youth Reconnect, which has been working with local high schools to help teens work through their housing issues to find stability in their own community, that is

beginning to change.

The program, launched in 2008, works with "kids who are precariously housed, who are having problems at home but are not homeless yet," Letby said.

Each situation is analyzed to determine its severity and to figure out a solution best suited for the individual's needs. The program is returning home, making alternate arrangements or finding suitable housing on their own.

"The majority of cases are successful," Letby said, with students able to find stable housing and to stay in school in their own community.

He estimated the program assists 150 to 200 youths across the region each year.

Since introducing the program, usage of The RAFT's 24-bed emergency hostel has

EMERGENCY CONTACTS FOR YOUTHS

The RAFT: 905-984-4365

The 24-hour emergency hostel at 17 Centre St. in St. Catharines is open seven days a week.

Nightlight Youth

Services: 905-358-3678
The 16-bed facility, at 5519 Ontario Ave. in Niagara Falls, is open seven days a week, 24

hours a day.

Port Cares: 905-835-1914
Emergency kits are available at the Reach Out Centre, 61 Nickel St. in Port Colborne, Mondays to Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

been reduced by 50%.

"We're never at capacity now," Letby said, adding the facility averages eight to 10 youths per night.

Youth homelessness does, however, remain an issue in Niagara. Not all teens are accessing the help they need, he said.

Nightlight Youth Services, run through Boys and Girls Club of Niagara, has been continued despite its emergency stay.

The program offers emergency, short-term and long-term housing solutions at its 16-bed facility in Niagara Falls.

"Since 2011 when we opened, we have not seen a reduction in need," executive director JoAnne Turner said, adding the shelter was expanded from 10 beds after opening because of demand.

The facility, she said, runs at

close to capacity most nights.

"We're full and we believe we'll continue to be full," she said.

Young adults, she said, are becoming more aware of the services available to them in the community and are making use of them.

To help reach a broader audience, The RAFT is focusing now on reaching out to youths no longer connected to the school system to make sure they're aware help is available, Letby said.

Local agencies, she said, are "doing a better job of delivering services that youths need to ensure these kids have a safety net in the community."

Keeping teens in their community is the most important thing we can do," he said, adding it keeps them close to their peer group and to their school.

Graduation, he added, significantly reduces the likelihood of homelessness.

Donations for additional emergency kits will continue to be accepted and can be dropped off at either Port Cares or The RAFT.

"It seems people really want to step up and help, especially when youth are involved," Letby said.

"They don't want them to slip between the cracks. They want them to be contributing members of society."

■ NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE: Headquarters being built in Niagara Falls will integrate far-flung operations under one roof

New police HQ like a one-stop cop shop

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

It looks near completion from the outside, but there's still a lot of work to be done inside the new \$65-million Niagara Regional Police headquarters.

Deputy chief Joe Matthews said the NRP hopes to occupy the building in mid-to-late spring.

He said his guess is that the project is about 70% complete.

"It's a very complex building, so while the exterior looks very complete — there are certain portions of the interior that are getting close to completion, there

are also some that aren't as complete because of the technical nature of the construction," said Matthews.

"The block cells are more sophisticated, our forensic labs take an awful lot more time ... but ... it's an exciting thing for the whole region — people are talking about it because they see how far the construction has come along on the exterior."

"It's approximately 200,000 square feet of facility, so it will be built on eight acres at Valley Way and Portage Rd. It is part of an \$83-million project, which also includes a new St. Catharines police station.

The new headquarters

will be home to about 600 of the NRP's 1,100 uniform and civilian members. There will be 415 parking spaces and for the first time, many units will be on one roof.

The construction is being managed by Niagara Region, but moving day will be in the hands of the police. A special committee has been formed to oversee the details of the move.

Matthews said the opening of the headquarters will be timed with the completion of the NRP's new voice radio system.

"We're trying to meld the two projects together and we need ... time to do all the technical (set ups) within the

building that are necessary before we actually occupy."

He said there's a "whole lot more" to the new headquarters than simply replacing the existing Morrison St. police station.

"There are components from eight different facilities that will end up into that headquarters. There's technical components and actual people working in eight different facilities that will be housed within one, purpose-built facility."

For example, Matthews said the NRP's intelligence officers, who have worked off site for the past 30 years, will now be within the headquarters.

"Currently, that takes place within our different detachments, within the city, but it will be centralized under the new model."

"We're integrating, for the first time, a central lockup procedure, so anytime anyone is arrested anywhere in the region, the only cells that will be used will be at our central lockup in the new headquarters."

"As well, we're centralizing property and evidence function, so if you have an item stolen and the police recover it, we'll be operating sort of a central warehouse property and evidence out of the new facility."

"Currently, that takes place within our different detachments, within the city, but it will be centralized under the new model."

In an interview with Post-

media Network earlier this year, Chief Jeff McGuire said police have been waiting about 20 years for "reasonable, healthy, safe and functional operational facilities."

"A good work environment motivates people, and allows us to do our job efficiently," he said recently as part of Postmedia's monthly series of live webcasts about policing issues in Niagara.

"It's designed as a manager when overflow will be handled better. We won't have things that have to be moved from one building to another."

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Twitter: @RaySpiteri

LOCAL NEWS

BIZ BUZZ

Local shop battles Netflix for survival

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

It's not a new release.

As a matter of fact, you can rewind more than two decades and still find a video store sitting on the corner of King and Princess Sts.

While the Port Colborne business has changed names over the years, switching from Bonanza Video to Jumbo Video and back again, it has remained a constant provider of entertainment for cinema buffs of all ages.

But being in business for more than 20 years doesn't come without its challenges, especially for video stores, which have been working their way up the endangered species list.

Internet downloading and service providers such as Netflix have dealt a heavy blow to the industry over the years, store manager Laura Levere said.

"Years ago, I remember the store being extremely busy," she said, adding that while nights these days still pick up, the traffic is not what it used to be.

"It has evolved so dramatically over the years. The challenge for us is in downloading. It's hard to compete with that."

To keep customers engaged, the store has lowered prices on rentals and previously-viewed movies and has increased the length of rental times. It began actively promoting personal orders for home delivery and buying back DVDs from customers looking to sell.

"We try our best," Levere said of the staff of four.

"Nowadays you really have to assume more than one business to get by."

Not everyone is interested in the experience of heading to the video store in search of the next cinematic gem to grace their TV set, Levere said.

"Some people just want to stay home."

Television service providers and Internet-based streaming services have made it possible for people to view even the latest releases without ever



Bonanza Video manager Laura Levere at the King Street business.

leaving the couch — but it will cost them.

"We try to keep our prices cheap. You have to be competitive," Levere said, adding the store is always running promotions to try to draw customers in.

"We have people who come in all the time, but we also

have people we don't see for 10 or 15 years before they come back," she said.

The store gets its business not only from local residents, but also from tourists buying movies and cottagers and Sherkston Shores patrons looking to wind down with a film on a mellow night.

"The popcorn also helps. Everyone loves the popcorn," Levere said with a laugh of the popular hot treat offered free with every rental.

She said she believes many people continue to come to the store for the personalized service.

"You get to know the regu-

lar customers well," she said, adding she learns their likes and dislikes and can make recommendations of films they'd likely enjoy.

Levere is hopeful the community will continue to support the business, so it can stay afloat unlike other video stores that have fallen by the wayside over the past decade.

"There are so many stores closing. If you don't start supporting local businesses, you can't complain when they're gone," she said. "That support, it helps a lot."

To keep up to date with promotions, visit www.facebook.com/groups/bonanzavideo.

COLUMN

ORPP as proposed is not the answer to the problem

MISHKA BALSON
Special to Postmedia Network

In April of this year, the provincial government passed legislation to create the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) for the three million people who do not have a workplace pension. The pension problem is not an Ontario-only problem but rather a Canada-wide one. The under-saving of earners without workplace pension coverage puts these workers at a strong risk once they enter retirement, however the ORPP as proposed is not a resolution to this issue.

As such, Ontario's initial blanket solution can easily undergo great criticism from the business community due to the high costs to small and medium-sized organizations.

Earlier this week, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that she plans to expand the comparability rules under the

proposed ORPP to include some Defined Contribution (DC) plans. Therefore, employers who already provide certain DC pension plans for their employees will be exempt from contributing to the new ORPP. In addition, a longer phase-in period was announced to help Ontario businesses transition into the plan.

In its current form, the ORPP hinders the success of businesses and hurts our economic competitiveness. Here are some of the many challenges:

Being an Ontario-only plan means that the administration cost for collecting payroll contributions and paying benefits will be astronomical, not to mention it will be challenging to handle the Ontario workers and retirees moving in and out of this province.

As this plan does not work hand-in-hand with a federal plan, contributors will not receive a fair tax treatment.

Since the announcement of the ORPP, businesses have urged the government to redefine the plan's comparability to take into consideration plans like group RRSPs. This has not taken place yet. Instead, in its current format, the ORPP will raise costs for most businesses in Ontario.

Ontario employers are faced with a number of challenges and the electricity industry is not immune. The rising electricity prices (our province has one of the highest rates in North America), the introduction of a cap and trade system to limit greenhouse gas pollution and an increased minimum wage (second highest wage in Canada), will all increase the cost of doing business. And this is not mentioning Ontario's growing debt, a factor which economists have identified as the single biggest threat to Ontario's economy.

No economic impact study has been done on the cumulative impact that the proposed

changes will have on businesses.

A recent study by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce indicates that as a result of the ORPP's employer contribution, 44 per cent of businesses would plan to reduce their current payroll or hire fewer employees. This is truly not the direction that we want or could afford to go in Niagara and in this province.

With this in mind, a much decision like the one earlier this week, business confidence is reaching an all-time low.

Fortunately, this plan is not being launched until 2017. There is still time for these issues to be addressed. Pensions are an important issue to Niagara residents, but the ORPP in its current format is flawed. We have TSFA, RRSP and CPP capabilities as employees and employers. Bringing in another mandatory option is not the answer.

Mishka Balson is the CEO and President of The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce



PAUL BEESELEY / SPECIAL TO POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The steamer Orla has been a frequent caller through the Seaway since it was built in 1999.

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Shipwrecks – Orla

SKIP GILLHAM
Special to Postmedia Network

The Polish owned, but Maltese registered, steamer Orla has been a frequent caller through the Seaway since the steamer was built in 1999. The 149.40 metre long bulk carrier began inland trading in Nov. 2000 delivering a cargo of bauxite to Thorold before sailing to Duluth to load wheat. It was ten years ago that Orla suffered a mechanical problem that led to a grounding in the St. Clair River near Marysville, MI, on July 8, 2005. The crew was able to shift ballast water and the ship was able to get back on the Great Lakes and continue to Duluth to take on grain. On the way out of the lakes, on July 19, Orla got stuck again off Kahnawake, QC, and, to make things worse, was struck while aground by a passing tanker. Orla continues to come to the Great Lakes and was back inland on three occasions in 2014.



■ MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Port arts, culture under microscope

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

There's a new picture being painted in Port Colborne — one outlining the future for its arts and culture community.

Toronto-based Miller Dickinson Blais Inc. was awarded the contract last Monday night to create an arts and culture master plan for the lake-side city.

It was an approval that left Ward 2 Coun. Angie Desmarais feeling "ecstatic."

Desmarais originally brought a motion forward in May 2013 asking city council to consider creation of the plan.

While the city had made strides with recreation, having opened Vale Health and Wellness Centre only a few months prior, there "was still a big hole on the cultural end," she

recalled. She wanted to see Port Colborne reap the economic and social benefits of having a thriving arts and culture sector, and she believes the city will be able to do once a plan is in place.

"The city has never done an arts and culture master plan. This is groundbreaking," community services manager Harry Hakim said.

Council previously committed \$25,000 to the project, but through a partnership with Friends of Roselawn Centre and a grant proposal to the Ontario Trillium Foundation, additional funds were obtained that increased the budget to \$54,000 — a number the winning contractor fell just shy of.

The process will be divided into three phases during which the city's existing arts and culture status and assets

will be determined in detail, the public and stakeholders will be consulted, goals set for the arts and culture community and an implementation plan put in place to see those goals achieved. A cultural map of Port Colborne will be created and an economic development strategy put in place in an effort to see the city excel, Hakim said.

A steering committee is being established to work with consultants on the project, which is expected to be completed by spring 2016.

"We've got a good cross-section of people knowledgeable about visual arts, music and performing arts," Hakim said, adding the committee will include representatives from Friends of Roselawn, local arts groups and the art therapy field, as well as council representative Ron



MARYANNE FIRTH/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Roselawn Centre in Port Colborne.

Bodner.

"You can't go anywhere without a plan," said the Ward 4 councillor, who was appointed to the committee

by council. Desmarais will act as the council alternate.

He expects the master plan will not only lay out the thoughts of the committee

tee and the consultants," but also provide recommendations that can be prioritized and acted upon come budget time.

"We've got a pretty vibrant arts and culture community, but sometimes it's fragmented," Bodner said.

"We're not always putting all of our efforts together," he said, adding collaborations can help the sector to thrive.

"It just makes sense for us to work together and see where our strengths are."

Bodner, who was chosen for the committee in part due to his role as chair of the Niagara Region Coast Tourism Association, expects confidence in using arts and culture to further boost tourism in the municipality.

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Ontario pension gets mixed reviews

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

Joe Critelli provides an optional private pension plan for his 14 employees at Critelli Furniture.

But it likely won't be a good enough substitute for the province's plan to

operate its own pension plan, details of which were unveiled Tuesday.

And that will likely mean an accounting headache for Critelli and at other small businesses across the province.

In April, Ontario passed legislation to create a provincial

pension for more than three million people who do not have a workplace pension, will require workers to contribute 1.9% of their annual earnings, up to \$1,643 a year, and employers will have to match that.

In an announcement Tuesday, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne clarified phase-in steps, based on the number of employees in a firm, to ensure everyone is covered by the new provincial pension plan, a comparable workplace pension.

"At this point, it looks like I could be faced with administering a Canada Pension Plan, Ontario Pension Plan and a private plan all together by that date," said Critelli.

He said everyone has the right to adequate pensions, "but we believe the federal government is better

equipped with its own existing plan than the provincial government.

"How can we permit this kind of duplication in an age where everyone, including business, is trying to become more efficient?"

Under the provincial rules, there will be phases of enrollment.

The new pension plan will be phased in starting in 2017 for employers with 500 or more workers and no workplace pension. That will be followed by medium-sized employers on Jan. 1, 2018. And those with 50 or fewer employees will be enrolled in 2019.

Companies with defined contribution pension plans that exceed 1.9% of an employee's salary will be exempt from the plan, as long as the employee contributes at least 4%.

Employers with a workplace pension plan that isn't adjusted to meet the government's comparability test — as well as employees who aren't members of their work-

place comparable plan — will start contributions on Jan. 1, 2020.

Meanwhile, Wynne and Prime Minister Stephen Harper have engaged in a war of words during the federal election campaign over Ontario's pension plan, which Harper warns will kill jobs by increasing costs for busi-

nesses.

PUBLIC, BUSINESS WAS CONSULTED: BRADLEY

Canada Pension Plan itself was being debated in the House of Commons decades ago, similar arguments to those made against the provincial plan were put forward then.

"No one that I know of now refers to Canada Pension Plan premiums as a 'tax,'" he said.

Bradley adds even former Ontario省長 David Dodge has said the country is going to be in a situation where people are simply not going to have enough money in retirement.

Part of that is due to people living longer, and the lack of workplace pension plans in many places of employment.

"In fact, many have had their plans scaled back considerably in very recent years," Bradley said.

Wynne, in turn, said Harper is playing politics and vowed to proceed without Ottawa's help, but admits it will cost more to set up the Ontario plan without federal help.

Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce CEO Mishka Balson said "in general, the announcement (Tuesday) is a step in the right direction for Ontario businesses."



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■ WELLSPRING NIAGARA

Duo up to the 1,000 Ball Challenge

GREG FURNIGER
Postmedia Network

It takes a lot of balls to pull off what J.J. Alexander and Chris Poulouski will do at the end of this month.

Each will be participating in the 1,000 Ball Challenge that Alexander started three years ago to raise money for Wellspring Niagara.

Alexander, Lookout Point County Club's head golf pro, and Poulouski, the pro at Sparrow Lakes Golf Club, will each drive 1,000 balls from tee to Lookout Point on Sunday, Aug. 30, beginning at 7 a.m.

"I try to hit about 120 balls an hour," says Alexander.

"It's a little wear and tear on the body," he says of the feat. "It's a lot of blisters on your hands at the end of the day."

Each of the 1,000 golf balls can be purchased for donations for \$5 through either golf club's Wellspring Niagara.

The funds are earmarked for the new regional cancer support centre building that will rise in the east Fonthill expansion area, on land at Hwy. 20 and Rice Rd., that the Town of Pelham in April agreed to lease to Wellspring for a year.

Alexander started the golf-ball challenge in September 2013 to help long-time Lookout Point member and friend Carol Smith, who later died of a rare form of melanoma and who was a member of Wellspring Niagara. The money raised in the first year helped her with clinical drug costs.

Alexander continues to support Wellspring Niagara, to which a few years ago

he turned when he had "a little bout of cancer."

Poulouski came on board late last year. This will be his first full-fledged participation in the 1,000 Ball Challenge. A Sparrow Lakes employee for the past seven years, he was assistant golf pro at Lookout Point from 1994 to 2006.

Accelerated Health and Wellness Centre, a multi-disciplinary healthcare service centre in Fonthill, has been a major sponsor of the challenge since the start.

Individual sponsors who purchase golf balls will have their name and number for each ball golf goes into the hole, the sponsor's name — it could be in memory of a loved one — will be entered for a chance to win \$500. If no golf ball goes into the hole, the entire field of entries will have a chance to win \$500.

"I will be there that morning cheering them on," Wellspring executive director Anna Mantini-Celima says of Alexander and Poulouski.

"It's fun. It's a unique event."

Not only does it raise funds for Wellspring, she says, it raises awareness of the cancer centre — and its plans to move from Fonthill into a new 7,600-square-foot building.

Mantini-Celima says planning for the new facility's fundraising campaign launch has started. Formation of a campaign cabinet is planned for this fall.

Annually, Wellspring serves more than 500 men, women and children.

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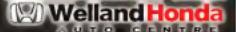
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■ COMMUNITY: New outreach program to deliver food to the less fortunate



COMMUNITY RESPONSE UNIT

FRANKI IZEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Emily Bowman prepares meals for the night's drop-offs to Port Colborne and Welland in the Salvation Army's food truck.

Salvation Army strikes back at hunger

FRANKI IZEMAN
Postmedia Network

The Salvation Army in Welland and Port Colborne wants to Take Out Hunger.

The initiative asks for community partners — restaurants, churches and service clubs — for a once-a-year partnership to provide meals for their Niagara Mobile Outreach Program.

The food program, commonly referred to as the food truck, makes stops throughout Niagara to give meals to people who are struggling.

On Tuesdays, the truck hits Welland and Port Colborne, making two stops in each of the cities. For Welland and Port Colborne — where the Salvation Army doesn't have kitchens to prepare food — running the program is a bit more difficult.

Niagara Mobile Outreach worker Emily Bowman says there is a real need for the meals the program provides, especially with what appears to be an affordable housing crisis throughout the region.

"I think our region is working toward a solution, but in the meantime people are stuck, so this is one small way we can help," said Bowman.

To date, Bowman says, she has about 31 Tuesdays covered for the year. Some of the partners will be doing more than just one a year, she says. Warrentin, executive director of the Salvation Army in Welland, Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Dunnville, said Take Out Hunger is their idea to allow them to approach a group in Welland and Port Colborne they haven't gone to before to ask them to contribute

what they do best — cooking meals.

"We like to offer variety on the truck, so each restaurant has their own style and type of food that they can make, and that's something that then we can offer to the people on the street," said Warrentin.

He stressed the importance of proper health and safety standards being met by any groups donating meals to the program.

Warrentin said there is no pressure for restaurants to participate, and that they can contribute once or several times depending on what suits them.

He added his group is not looking for full-plated meals, just simple ones such as sandwiches that can help.

One of the venues already on board is Blue Star Restaurant, owned by John Plental.

"I just like to help people out in general, you know, a lot of people need help," Plental said.

He said he and his team like to help out and donate whenever they can, and the staff react well to engaging in the community and helping people who are less fortunate. He said he encourages other restaurants to do the same.

Take Out Hunger is a pilot program, starting in Welland and Port Colborne. Bowman said she hopes to bring it to Fort Erie soon, where she makes outreach deliveries on Monday nights and has alerted her counterparts in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls to the idea as well.

franki.izeman@sunmedia.ca
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■ PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire officials discourage use of flying lanterns

GREG FURNINGER
Postmedia Network

They look pretty floating through the sky at night—but they pose a serious fire risk to buildings and crops.

In a Township of Wainfleet website posting, Wainfleet Fire and Emergency Services asks residents to refrain from using sky lanterns — a.k.a. Chinese lanterns.

The lanterns are small paper hot-air balloons fuelled by an open flame. When released, the lanterns can climb to great heights and drift for long distances until the fuel is depleted. Typically orange in colour, their glow can be seen from several kilometres away.

But because the fire department, due to their uncontrolled and unpredictable flight path, the lanterns can land on trees, building rooftops or other combustible properties, while still ignited, and potentially cause a fire.

The advisory, for which township website data indicates has been posted since early July, notes that the lanterns can be purchased at retail stores and online.

Fire Chief Harry Flagg said the advisory was issued after a couple of residents had come forward to report finding the remains of lanterns on their properties.

"It's more or less just a safety item," he said of public notice.

"I'm sure all the other fire chiefs would agree with it."

There are no provincial or federal laws against use of flying lanterns, Flagg said. Mike Agnew, director of fire prevention for Wellington Fire and Emergency Services, said Health Canada, which works closely with the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal, is monitoring the practise of setting fires skyward.

He's not aware of any problems having been caused by flying lanterns in Wellington — but his fire service also discourages their use.

"When we're inspecting stores that sell fireworks, we ask them not to sell them," Agnew said.

Questions or concerns can be addressed with Wainfleet's fire prevention officer by calling 905-899-3463, ext. 277.

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■ **FITNESS:** Program lets older people get fit under expert supervision

Brock centre gets seniors moving

KARENA WALTER
Postmedia Network

At 95 years old, Chuck Page still hits the gym three times a week.

He's more motivated to go to Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being than if he tried to exercise at home.

"You think tomorrow, and tomorrow doesn't come," Page said of the excuses. "Here, you push yourself to continue."

Page, a Second World War air force veteran and former prisoner of war, said he was in good shape when he joined Brock's centre five years ago after hearing about it.

Staff assessed him and gave him 12 weeks of exercises to follow, the St. Catharines man has continued as a member ever since, using the weights and various machines.

"It's helping me," he said. "I think so, at my age."

The centre on Lockhart Dr. offers men and women over 55 the chance to work out with their peers while being

assisted by Brock University students and staff.

The unique facility was visited recently by Ontario's Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Mario Sergio, along with St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley.

With about 300 members, the centre is bursting at the seams.

It houses the SeniorFit program, of which Page is a member, as well as a Heart Strong program for people of various ages with or at risk of heart disease, and a Power Cord program for those with spinal cord injuries or multiple sclerosis.

The programs were housed in different locations and came under the same roof two years ago with about 60 members at the time.

"All of us are very dedicated to wanting it to succeed," said centre director Debbie O'Leary. "I think it benefits the community extremely. There's nothing like this in Niagara."

In any given year, the centre has 200 undergraduate and graduate students from departments such as nursing and kinesiology working with participants. The centre is run by staff who are also professors, and O'Leary said exercise and health research at the centre drives the program.

Most participants hear about the centre through word-of-mouth from friends or physicians. To attend, they need to get a note from their doctor. There is a monthly fee to join.

Each member is given an individual exercise program and a book to track their progress and blood pressure.

O'Leary said the centre tries to offer variety to members to keep things interesting, such as yoga classes or outdoor walking.

"I think it's been good for everyone who's joined," O'Leary said.

Centre manager Scott Stevens said some participants had never stepped in a gym

before. Others have been active for 25 years.

More than 200 improvements, like one man who lost 70 pounds, and others whose doctors have taken them off medications. Some participants' spouses have joined to keep active too.

Stevens said it's good for members and the system at large if they can help people stay in their homes for an

extra five years.

"I'm delighted that I've come in and see what's happening in the centre here, the benefits this is doing to our seniors community," said Sergio after taking a tour of the facility.

Sergio, currently doing consultations on seniors centres across Ontario, was in St. Catharines to be keynote speaker at the United Senior Citizens of Ontario annual convention.

Power Cord member Andrew Pollock of St. Catharines spoke with the

LEARN MORE

For information about the centre and becoming a member:

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Chuck Page of St. Catharines at the Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being.

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Festival's a chance to brush up on your beer

TIFFANY MAYER
For Postmedia Network

I like to think I know what I'm doing when I have a beer in my hand.

Being of German stock, I figure I'm a natural born beer drinker, able to hold my hops and barley

with ease.

My said-slipping skills have stayed sharp by listening on to a weekend of drinking advice offered by German relatives, most notably drink my beer with a glass of water close by.

It's sound and somewhat sobering wisdom, though when I use it

at beer festivals I find I spend as much time in line for the bathroom as I do for beer. So maybe it's not the most practical advice.

With the Niagara Craft Beer Festival set for Saturday and Sunday at the Niagara-on-the-Lake farmers market grounds, I figure this is a good time to brush up on

beer drinking and learn how to really navigate my way through a beer fest like a pro.

This is the second year for the event, which has gone through a bit of an overhaul since the inaugural festival last year that drew 8,000 people.

Organizer Brian Kerr promises a scaled-back version when it comes to crowd size and entertainment — think local talent and a few bands from elsewhere in the province versus last year's headliners of the Trews and U.S.S.

"The scale and scope of the Niagara Craft Beer Festival in 2014 was gigantic," Kerr says.

"We had a massive budget and were trying to compete with the larger beer festivals in Canada. It kind of got away from what we wanted to do."

And that is focusing on the beer and food, while creating a venue where friends come together to socialize over both.

One hundred beers will be flowing from the taps of more than 25 breweries at this weekend's edition. Niagara breweries will get no billing, along with selections from throughout Ontario that aren't always easy to find.

Though beer festivals abound these days thanks to the craft beer boom, there's no better setting for one than Niagara, Kerr says.

We're home to established breweries Silversmith, Oast House, Tapstone, Niagara College and the Merchant Ale House. But, Kerr notes, there's another handful of newly opened (or close to it) beer spots, including Brothers Brewing and Brock Brewhouse.

"We probably have more craft breweries per capita than anywhere in Ontario. It's taking on a life of its own, and we're really becoming known for beer tourism," Kerr says.

Our craft beer industry is following a similar path as our wine industry did 25 years ago and we have the opportunity to establish ourselves as a world-class beer destination."

Which makes swilling like a pro even more of an essential skill. So here's what Kerr suggests to be ahead of the curve at this weekend's Niagara Craft Beer Festival:

First, don't have your heart set on drinking all 100 beers. "You have to come

in with a realistic attitude," he says. "If you want to try 100 beers, have at it. But we'll probably be taking your keys from you very quickly."

Second, make the rounds when you arrive to see who's serving what. Then come up with a plan: do you want to try beers you've never seen before? Maybe you have a few favourite breweries you want to frequent. Some will have a dozen beers on tap. Your best bet is to pick one or two to try so you can work in as many others later.

While you're at it, soak the shade areas, seating (or bring your own lawn chair) and where to find bottled water. My German relatives aren't entirely off the mark about balancing your booze with H2O intake, so scope out the bathrooms, too.

Third, resist the urge to immediatelygulp your glassful.

There's an art to beer sampling, Kerr explains. Stick your nose in your glass and breathe deeply, as if you were doing a wine tasting. Then, take a swig. The schnoz will be hard at work picking up those hoppy, yeasty aromas, don't wear coconut-scented sunscreen, he advises.

Study the appearance of those suds, the colour and clarity. Take a couple small sips to cleanse the palate, followed by a big gulp swirled around to "understand the complexity of the beer."

Then give thought to the finish, that final impression left in the mouth. Though it sounds a bit heady, it will really help you decide if you really like what you're drinking.

Fourth, don't forget to eat. There will be lots of local culinary talent, and beer oysters to work off the extra calories, if you're counting.

Fifth, don't worry about using up your beer tokens. The leftovers can be donated to Red Roof Retreat, the festival's charity of choice this year. Red Roof Retreat in Niagara-on-the-Lake provides respite and recreation programs for children with special needs.

Sixth, enjoy yourself. "This is Ontario beer country," Kerr says. "We really want people to come out and have a kick-ass time."

Visit niagaracraftbeerfestival.ca for tickets and more information.

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■ NS&T LINE AND STATION COMMEMORATED

Rail history tracked to Merritton

KAREN WALTER
Postmedia Network

As Niagara politicians push for GO train service, a rail line that once linked communities along the Welland Canal corridor and beyond was remembered last Tuesday.

The line from St. Catharines and Thorold to Niagara Falls — one of the first electric interurban railways in Canada — was commemorated with a plaque in Merritton where one of its stations once stood.

"Niagara was a hub of innovation," said Paul Chapman,

NS&T plaque project co-ordinator for the Niagara division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association, adding there are opportunities for growth.

"If we can do it once, we can do it again. That speaks to our future as a Niagara community."

The NS&T was in service from 1899 to 1959. Its main line connected the now St. Catharines communities of Port Dalhousie, Port Weller and Merritton with Thorold and Niagara Falls. The Welland division went from Thorold to Welland and Port Colborne. It also had a boat service on Lake Ontario.

The popularity of buses and automobiles led to a decline in ridership and the eventual end of the innovative service.

"It's unfortunate we had to lose the connections over time," said St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik, adding Niagara was a leader in terms of transit at that time.

Both Sendzik and Regional Chair Alan Caslin recalled the

THE MERRITTON NS&T STATION

The station opened in 1913 and was removed in 1938. Train cars on two lines came into the station.

The steam line, St. Catharines and Niagara Central Railway, went to Niagara Falls via Thorold. It was purchased by NS&T in 1901 and converted to an electric railway.

The Port Dalhousie St. Catharines and Thorold Electric Railway was purchased by NS&T in 1901. Horseshoe cars were replaced by an overhead trolley system in 1888. It was replaced by buses in 1931.

— from Niagara Division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association

the GO train.

"Railway transportation in Niagara is far from finished,"

Caslin told people gathered after the unveiling at a reception at nearby Johnny Roccos. "We're not finished!"

The plaque unveiled Tuesday by the local chapter of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association is at the corner of Merritton Street and Bessey Street, just south of Glendale Avenue.

The green space was once the site of the Merritton rail station that served two lines. The property is now owned by Trillium Railway, which allowed the association to erect the plaque.

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THEATRE

One last round of Rocky Horror

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

You better do the time warp while you still can.

One of local theatre's most popular offerings, *The Rocky Horror Show* in Niagara-on-the-Lake, has begun its fourth and final season at Cork's Playhouse Theatre on Queen Street.

And not because audiences have had enough. Far from it, says director Dina Mavrodis. Last weekend's opening was packed the place as usual.

"In all honesty, people think we're crazy," she says. "The shows have been selling really well. We've had a lot of sold-out performances, especially the past

two years. Why stop now?"

Because even a successful *Rocky* needs to recharge its batteries. After four years of garters and over-the-top transvestites, Mavrodis and husband Rob Burke, who started the show with their company Something-Something Productions, want to try something different.

Something smaller. With less smeared lipstick.

"Until this becomes my nine-to-five job, I have to take breaks," she says. "I can kind of explore more."

Mavrodis' family owns Corks, the former Buttery restaurant which was home to the Henry the VIII feast. She and Burke starred in a production of *Rocky* at the

Port Mansion Theatre in Port Dalhousie, and decided to keep the fun going when they formed their own theatre company in 2012.

The crowds responded immediately, filling the intimate 65-seat theatre during summer. At the same time, the company offered productions like *The Vagina Monologues* in May and the interactive mystery *The Sweet Sounds of Murder* last March.

Rocky was by far the company's favourite offering, however. While it makes it bittersweet to say goodbye.

"We love it, we really do," says Mavrodis, who also plays Majaeta. "Rob and I look at each other all the time during rehearsals, or even during opening weekend,

WHAT: the Rocky Horror Show
WHERE: Cork's Playhouse Theatre, 19 Queen St., Niagara-on-the-Lake

WHEN: Fridays and Saturdays until Oct. 10, 8 p.m.

TICKETS: \$27 to \$37
www.rockyhorrorniagara.com

learn to slow down. But if there isn't any [new show] in winter, definitely early 2016."

"I love theatre and this is my dream. A lot of people think it's crazy and, yeah, it is. And I love it."

Rocky Horror is scheduled to wrap up Oct. 10. Mavrodis says the nine cast members and eight ushers (also in character) are already getting emotional.

"We've already got people in the cast crying. I'm not kidding," she says. "There are some cast members who've been here since we started the company and *Rocky*. It's such a big part of our lives."

"It's bittersweet, but I think when we bring it back it's going to be that much more exciting."

john.law@summitmedia.ca



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SOMETHING-SOMETHING PRODUCTIONS/PHOTO

It's one last hurrah for The Rocky Horror Show in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Something-Something Productions will give the show a break after its fourth season wraps Oct. 10.

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■ **CONSERVATION:** Fort Erie plant looks to reduce costs, help employees save at home

Durez Canada workers enlisted to save energy

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

With costs always on the rise, the

Durez Canada plant in Fort Erie is continually looking for ways to conserve energy.

Now its employees are taking what they have learned at work and applying it at home.

■ **IMPORT NEWS ■ THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2015**

"We have made a concentrated effort to really look at things from an everyday point of view that can take a lot of your energy and force your costs to go up and you are not necessarily aware of it," said Robert Hunt, manager of the Dunlop Street plant which dates to 1970 and makes resins and compounds that are commonly known as bakelite. Some of its product is used in the auto industry.

The plant, which has about 80 employees, is undertaking a three-year process to control and reduce energy costs. The process empowers all employees within the company, while partnering with some of its stakeholders that include utility companies, to find ways to reduce and control energy costs.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the plant held energy awareness days in the lunch room for employees so they could better understand what is being accomplished inside their facility. That also had representatives from the plant's energy team, Canadian Niagara Power, Enbridge Gas Distribution, and 360 Energy Inc., to answer questions.

"We want to get some of this information to our employees and if it helps them at home that's even better," said Hunt.

Lisa Brodeur, from 360 Energy Inc., an energy consulting company from Ancaster, has been working with Durez on its energy management program.

"We have given the employees an energy-saving kit so they can save some money at home, but we also want to make them think more about what is going on at the plant," said Brodeur. In 2014, Durez saved about \$65,000 on their energy because they were able to make some

changes, and in 2015 we expect to see them save about \$100,000. Significant savings can be found on energy, especially on the industrial and manufacturing side, without any significant capital costs."

George Hanzits, from Enbridge Gas Distribution, noted the company has worked with Durez by looking at such things as insulation and steam pipes to see where it can save on gas costs.

For employees, he was handing out small hourglass timers filled with sand. It takes five minutes for the sand to empty into the hourglass and it's meant as a reminder when people are taking a shower.

Hanzits said taking a long, hot shower is one of the main contributors to a high energy bill. It takes a lot of energy to heat the water and one simple way to save money is to take shorter showers.

"This timer will stick on the wall and it's a reminder that you have five minutes to get out of the shower and then get out," said Hanzits. "It gets people thinking and makes them more aware about how much water they are using."

Some of the information being provided by Canadian Niagara Power included an appliance usage chart.

The table shows how much electricity certain appliances use in an average month. For example, a central air conditioning unit in a home can cost \$150, while a small air conditioner in a room might be about \$40 or \$50.

A clothes washer will use about 72 cents in electricity, while a clothes dryer will eat up about \$4. A computer, printer and monitor will use less than \$3 a month, while a water heater with a typical family of four costs about \$60 a month.

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■ LOTTO

Thorold man hits jackpot

A Thorold man is \$162,644 richer after winning a Poker Lotto All in jackpot.

The winning ticket was purchased at Milk Maid Shoppe on Merritt Street in St. Catharines.

Dominic Di Lallo told the retailer he thought he won something big.

"The feeling was just electrifying and my head was spinning as I left the store," he told Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. officials when picking up his prize in Toronto.

Di Lallo plans to use the money to pay off bills and take his family on a vacation.

His winning ticket from Aug. 11 had a \$157,644 prize through Poker Lotto All in and another \$5,000 prize on the instant portion of the Poker Lotto play.

This is a lucky week for Niagara residents.

A Grimsby woman had a winning ticket for months without knowing it picked up her \$100,000 Encore win from the May 20 Lotto 6/49 draw.

A Beamsville man picked up his \$50-million Lotto Max winnings Friday after holding onto that ticket for five months.

Emergency Services and Niagara EMS were called to the bridge at 12:47 a.m. after it was reported someone climbed the structure but hadn't been seen returning to the ground.

A search of the bridge ensued and lasted about an hour before a male in his mid-20s was located, deputy fire Chief Brian Kennedy said.

"We had a hard time finding him. We had to use the aerial (ladder)," Kennedy said.

"He was distraught and up on the catwalk around the center of the bridge. You couldn't see him from the ground."

Two police officers and a firefighter went up in the ladder's bucket and were able to bring the man down without incident, Kennedy said.

No further details were immediately available.



Man rescued from Main Street Bridge

An incident at the Main Street Bridge ended without injury early Saturday morning following a lengthy search by emergency personnel.

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■ DRUGS: Prescription painkiller causing overdoses with drug users

'Fentanyl could kill you'

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

It's a drug stronger than morphine, more addictive than heroin and potentially fatal in mere minutes.

And now Fentanyl is creating problems in Niagara.

Additional health and law-enforcement officials are becoming more aware of the presence and danger of the prescription painkiller that has made its way into the illicit drug market as a cheap product for dealers to sell, and a powerful high for addicts to chase.

Sixteen people overdosed this past weekend in Vancouver — six in one hour — after they took what they thought was heroin, but is believed to have been heroin cut with Fentanyl.

Fentanyl has also been linked to two recent alleged crimes in Niagara.

A masked assailant who brandished a small, black semi-automatic hand gun, robbed Brodies Drug Store in Ridgeway earlier this month, leaving the scene with a quantity of Fentanyl patches.

In July, more than 20 Fentanyl patches with a possible street value of \$7,700 were seized by Niagara Regional Police after they observed a drug transaction in a St. Catharines parking lot.

Police seized one Fentanyl patch in the parking lot, and after a search warrant at a couple's apartment, an additional 21 patches were seized.

The couple were charged with drug-trafficking offences.

"I'm not going to say Fentanyl is an epidemic or anything in Niagara, but it's certainly a concern," said Todd Waselovich, who as part of his job, deals with prescription drug matters.

"The big thing with Fentanyl is it's so potent and people that are using it — that are using opioid drugs — don't realize how potent it is," he said.

"Sometimes, they're getting the drug and they don't even know how potent it is if it's mixed in with something and it could obviously cause overdoses."

Those abusing Fentanyl can't always be sure how large a dose they're getting. It can be mixed into other drugs that can prove to be a deadly cocktail.

Waselovich said if someone uses cocaine for years, they "kind of know what they're getting." But if someone has never tried Fentanyl before, they don't have an opioid tolerance built up. So if they use the powerful synthetic opioid, they could overdose on first use because of how strong it is.

"That's why it's such a scare. If someone uses it, they understand how potent it is, but if they don't have that tolerance, one usage of Fentanyl could kill you."

Waselovich said it's because the pharmaceutical pain management medication is usually linked to a legitimate prescription, it can be tough to get it off the street.

"Even a used Fentanyl patch, let's say you put the patch on, you wear it for the duration that you're supposed to have that patch on and you remove it, it should be returned to a pharmacy for a proper disposal," he said.

DANGERS OF FENTANYL

Within the last six years, the number of deaths involving Fentanyl have spiked in Canada's four largest provinces, with increases ranging from almost doubling, to an increase of 20 times in recent years.

Fentanyl-implicated deaths increased about 1.7 times from 63 in 2009 to 111 in 2013.

Fentanyl-detected deaths increased by nearly seven times in British Columbia, from 13 in 2012 to 90 in 2014. In Alberta they increased

more than 20 times, from six in 2011 to 120 in 2014; in Quebec, they tripled, from seven in 2009 to 21 in 2013.

2009-2014: At least 1,019 drug poisoning deaths in Canada where Fentanyl was detected. This includes at least 655 deaths where Fentanyl was determined to be a cause or a contributing cause — an average of one Fentanyl-implicated death every three days.

— Source: Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use bulletin, released this month

it, but they're happening," Lisa Panetta, chief executive officer with Community Addictions Services of Niagara, said they are aware of Fentanyl, "but it doesn't look like epidemic use."

"Alcohol is still the biggest problem we see," she said.

However, Panetta said Fentanyl "has the potential to be very dangerous, that's why so many (agencies) are stepping up and paying attention to it."

"It's an unpredictable drug to use and a very powerful drug."

Panetta said pharmacies in some cities have a policy where patients prescribed with Fentanyl patches can't get another prescription until they hand in their patches.

"That's one way some communities are trying to prevent abuse," she said.

In May, Federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose announced \$13 million in funding during the next five years for 1,000 annual pharmacy inspections across Canada to help combat the diversion of legal, yet highly addictive, pain prescription drugs to illegal street markets.

At a symposium on prescription drug abuse in Burlington, Ambrose confirmed Canada has the second-highest rate of prescription opioid consumption, next to the United States.

Construction of Transmission Line Infrastructure Notice For the Niagara Region Wind Project, FWRN LP

Project Name

Niagara Region Wind Project (the "Project")

Project Location

Within the Townships of West Lincoln and Wainfleet and the Town of Lincoln in the Niagara Region and Haldimand County in Southern Ontario

Notice Dated At

Haldimand County and Niagara Region, the 11th of August 2015.

Niagara Region Wind Corporation, now FWRN LP (the "Proponent"), is planning to engage in a renewable energy project for which a Renewable Energy Approval ("REA") was issued by the Ministry of the Environment (now the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change on November 21, 2014.)

Project Description

The Project is located within the Townships of West Lincoln and Wainfleet and the Town of Lincoln in the Niagara Region and Haldimand County in Southern Ontario. The Project will consist of 77 wind turbine generators, step-up transformer, electrical collector lines, a transmission line, two transformer substations, turbine access roads and construction staging areas.

The Project will have a total maximum nameplate capacity of up to 230 MW.

Commencement of Construction of Transmission Line Infrastructure

Early activities will consist of initial surveying, grading activities, and site marking along the transmission line route.

These activities are described in detail in the REA technical reports found on the Project website: www.nrwc.ca.

By August 31st, 2015, the Project is expected to be under full construction. Installation of transmission line infrastructure is expected to begin in September 2015. Construction activities are expected to last approximately 16 months.

Project Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the project's construction phase, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

NIAGARA REGION WIND PROJECT CONTACT	EPTCON CONSTRUCTION CONTACT
<p>Shiloh Berriman Email: Shiloh.berriman@enron.ca Cell: 289-683-2563</p>	<p>John Niro Email: J.Niro@eptcon.de Cell: 519-277-0545</p>





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Join us for Vale Day on Sunday August 30th, 2015!

Vale, in partnership with the City of Port Colborne and the Port Colborne YMCA, is hosting a **FREE** activity day for the Port Colborne community at the Vale Health & Wellness Centre. Participants will be able to enjoy open gym, swimming and skating opportunities. There will be additional recreation programs that cater to both children and adults. Please refer to the schedule below for times and locations. For more information, call Community Services at the City of Port Colborne at 905-835-2901 x35 or email communityservices@portcolborne.ca.

Vale will also be hosting our annual Open House! Come visit us in the Main Lobby where you can get an update on our operations, talk to Vale staff, and discuss issues that are important to you. We hope to see you there!

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